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ABSTRACT

Librarians' interest in and concern with the legislative process and with their relationship with elected officials is accelerating. The obvious reason for this is the deteriorating financial situation facing libraries of all types. It has become critically important for the future of libraries that librarians become knowledgeable in the contest for the diminishing tax dollar. Although most libraries have seldom been able to claim affluence, their financial situation over the past 10 or 15 years could be characterized as relatively stable and, in some sense, on the ascendance. The situation has now changed. Even library systems like that of Contra Costa County, California, which enjoy community and local government support, are now faced with potential budget reductions. Like other public agencies, the library must now concretely demonstrate the value of its public services. First, attention must be given to maintaining good relations with the community and with local government officials, while providing the best possible library service. It is also necessary to develop specific performance measures--hard data which will help to prove that the library deserves the tax dollars it receives. (Author/SL)

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REMARKS GIVEN FOR THE
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JUST AS A MATTER OF PERSONAL INTEREST, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A SMALL POLL OF YOU IN ATTENDANCE THIS MORNING. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE ATTENDED OTHER PROGRAMS SIMILAR TO THIS ONE IN THE PAST, EITHER AT ANOTHER ALA CONFERENCE, A STATE ASSOCIATION MEETING OR OTHER LIBRARY CONFERENCE? HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE ATTENDED MORE THAN ONE SUCH PROGRAM?

I AM SURE THAT MOST OF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE INTERESTING SCHEDULING FOR THIS CONFERENCE THAT HAS TWO OTHER PROGRAMS VERY SIMILAR TO THIS ONE GOING ON AT THIS VERY MOMENT. BOTH OF THEM DEALING WITH THE NATIONAL COMMISSION REPORT AND PLANS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE AND, OBVIOUSLY, EVEN IF ONLY INDIRECTLY, WITH LEGISLATION AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

HERE IN CALIFORNIA WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED A WEEK-LONG LIBRARY PLANNING INSTITUTE SPONSORED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY AND FUNDED WITH A PROJECT GRANT THROUGH THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTE WAS TO TRAIN LIBRARIANS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS WITH THE SECONDARY PURPOSE OF REVIEWING THE RECENTLY COMPLETED PEAT, MARWICK, AND MITCHELL STUDY OF CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS. THE STUDY IS TITLED A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WITH GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT DECADE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, A MAJOR PART OF THE INSTITUTE WAS DEVOTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, SPECIFICALLY WHAT THE BEST APPROACH WOULD BE TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE IN GAINING APPROVAL OF A NEW STATE AID LAW.

THESE PREFATORY REMARKS ARE PROVIDED TO POINT OUT THE OBVIOUS. THAT IS, THAT THIS MATTER OF HOW WE APPROACH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IS NOT NEW. IT HAS PROBABLY BEEN DISCUSSED AND EXAMINED AT LIBRARY

IR 002 428

CONFERENCES SINCE LIBRARY MEETINGS BEGAN: HOWEVER, AS WE CAN SEE FROM THIS CONFERENCE AND OTHER MEETINGS DURING THE PAST YEAR, THIS INTEREST AND CONCERN IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS IS ACCELERATING. OBVIOUSLY THE REASON FOR THIS INCREASED INTEREST IS THE GENERAL AND SOMETIMES MASSIVE DETERIORATION OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION FACING MOST LIBRARIES OF ALL TYPES. IT HAS BECOME CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES THAT LIBRARIANS BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE CONTEST FOR THE DIMINISHING TAX DOLLAR.

ALTHOUGH MOST LIBRARIES HAVE SELDOM BEEN ABLE TO CLAIM A STATE OF FINANCIAL AFFLUENCY, THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION OVER THE PAST TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS RELATIVELY STABLE AND, IN SOME SENSE, ON THE ASCENDENCY. THE PASSAGE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES ACT IN THE 50'S AND LATER THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT IN THE 60'S, PROVIDED A NEEDED INFLUX OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, A NUMBER OF STATES INITIATED OR IMPROVED ON ALREADY EXISTING STATE AID LAWS PROVIDING STATE FUNDS FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT. ALSO, THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE WAS SUCH THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WERE IMPROVING LOCAL FUNDING FOR LIBRARY SERVICE.

THIS SITUATION HAS CHANGED. IN REMARKS HE MADE AT THE CALIFORNIA PLANNING INSTITUTE MENTIONED EARLIER, CHARLES NELSON, THE PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT FOR THE PEAT, MARWICK AND MITCHELL TEAM, POINTED OUT THAT LIBRARIES ARE NO LONGER IN THE 60'S WHERE PLANS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE WERE PREDICATED ON THE EXPECTATIONS OF INCREASED FUNDING. THE OPPOSITE IS NOW TRUE. THE FUNDING SITUATION AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT HAS ERODED AND MONEY IS NOT EASY TO COME BY. THIS APPROACH IS NEEDED IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE. PARENTHETICALLY, I MIGHT ADD THAT THIS SHOULD HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE, BUT THAT IS NOT THE NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS.

WHEN DAN HENKE ASKED ME TO SERVE ON THIS PANEL, HE ASKED THAT

I DIRECT MY REMARKS SPECIFICALLY TO THE QUESTION OF HOW A COUNTY LIBRARIAN EFFECTIVELY PROMOTES A LIBRARY SYSTEM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT WITH THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. AS SOMEONE POINTED OUT TO ME THE OTHER NIGHT, THIS SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD BE ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE VOLUME OF HOW I RUN MY LIBRARY WELL.

ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY WHY DAN PRESENTED ME WITH THIS DUBIOUS HONOR, PROBABLY THE MAIN REASON IS THAT HE AND HIS FAMILY LIVE IN OUR COUNTY AND ARE USERS OF OUR COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES. ALTHOUGH I DON'T WANT TO PUT WORDS INTO HIS MOUTH, I'M SURE HE RECOGNIZES THE SAME THING I DID WHEN I ARRIVED IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY THREE YEARS AGO. THE COUNTY LIBRARY, LIKE THE COUNTY ITSELF, HAS GROWN RAPIDLY AND HAS DEVELOPED A FINE LEVEL OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE. I CAN SAY THIS BECAUSE THIS DEVELOPMENT OCCURRED UNDER MY PREDECESSOR. THIS DEVELOPMENT WAS DUE TO A COMBINATION OF INGREDIENTS, INCLUDING THE COUNTY LIBRARIAN'S GOOD PLANNING AND HARD WORK, ALONG WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MANY CITIZENS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP IN MANY LOCAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY FRIENDS ORGANIZATIONS (WE NOW HAVE SEVENTEEN FRIENDS GROUPS). THE WORK OF THE COUNTY LIBRARIAN AND THE CITIZENS GROUPS REFLECTED ITSELF IN A GENERALLY FAVORABLE AND SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF ELECTED OFFICIALS.

SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW COUNTY LIBRARIAN, IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE COUNTY LIBRARY HAS MAINTAINED THE SUPPORT OF CITIZENS ORGANIZATIONS (WE HAVE ADDED SEVERAL NEW AND REACTIVATED FRIENDS GROUPS) AND MAINTAINED A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS. ON A RELATIVE BASIS, OUR LIBRARY HAS ENJOYED AND STILL ENJOYS A FAVORABLE SITUATION: BUT ---.

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DONE WELL IN THE PAST, I WAS MADE RUDELY AWARE DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS THAT WE CANNOT REST ON OUR LAURELS. OUR COUNTY, TOO, IS FACED WITH THE FINANCIAL PRESSURES OF THE PRESENT

AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE FUTURE. IN THE PAST EIGHT MONTHS WE HAVE COMPLETED AND OPENED TWO NEW BRANCH BUILDINGS, DOUBLED THE SIZE OF A THIRD, AND ARE PREPARING TO OPEN ANOTHER NEW BRANCH SOMETIME IN JULY OR AUGUST. THIS HAS COME DURING A YEAR WHEN THE COUNTY, LIKE MOST OTHER JURISDICTIONS, HAS BEEN HIT HEAVILY WITH INFLATION, SUBSTANTIAL SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFIT INCREASES, AND INCREASED HUMAN SERVICES REQUIREMENTS. MAKING THE SITUATION EVEN MORE BINDING IS A STATE LAW PASSED IN 1972 WHICH PLACES A CEILING ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPERTY TAX REVENUES.

EARLY IN JUNE THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVED THE ADDITION OF SEVEN NEW POSITIONS FOR THE COUNTY LIBRARIAN SO THAT WE CAN OPEN OUR NEW BRANCH LATER IN THE SUMMER. ALTOUGH THEY APPROVED THESE NEW POSITIONS, THEY ALSO ASKED THAT THE COUNTY LIBRARIAN REVIEW THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY LIBRARY.

TWO WEEKS AGO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DIRECTED ALL COUNTY DEPARTMENT HEADS TO SUBMIT CONTINGENCY PLANS SHOWING 1%, 3%, AND 5% CUTS FROM HIS APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE UP-COMING FISCAL YEAR. WHETHER ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN ON THESE CONTINGENCY PLANS DEPENDS ON VARIOUS FACTORS, INCLUDING THE FINAL SALARY SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH BARGAINING UNITS, THE FINAL ASSESSED VALUATION FOR THE COUNTY, THE STATUS OF OTHER REVENUES AND SUBVENTIONS, AND THE GENERAL FINANCIAL CLIMATE OF THE COUNTRY.

ALTHOUGH THE LIBRARY IN THE END MAY NOT BE CUT, THE WHOLE SITUATION POINTS CLEARLY THE PRECARIOUS POSITION THAT LIBRARIES OCCUPY. EVEN THOUGH OUR LIBRARY ENJOYS A MODICUM OF FAVORAND SUPPORT AMONG BOTH CITIZENS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, IT IS AXIOMATIC THAT IF GOVERNING BODIES ARE FACED WITH A CRUNCH AND GET IN A FINANCIAL SWEAT, THE FIRST QUESTION THEY ASK IS WHAT SERVICES ARE THEY MANDATED TO PROVIDE AND WHICH ARE NOT MANDATED.

EVEN AMONG MANY OF THE LIBRARY'S CITIZEN SUPPORTERS THE QUESTION OF HOW YOU DIVIDE THE TAX DOLLAR BECOMES ACUTE IF THERE APPEARS THERE WILL BE AN IMPINGEMENT ON OTHER MORE BASIC SERVICES. AMONG OTHER TAXPAYERS THE DECISION WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT.

ALL OF THIS POINTS TO THE FACT THAT ALL OF US, EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A RELATIVELY GOOD LEVEL OF SUPPORT, CANNOT ASSUME THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THIS FAVORABLE POSITION. WE ARE BEING CATAPULTED INTO A MUCH LESS FAVORABLE POSITION AND, AS A CALIFORNIA COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER TOLD A GROUP OF LIBRARIANS RECENTLY, YOU WILL HAVE TO PRESS AHEAD IN ORDER TO STAND STILL. EVERY PUBLIC AGENCY IS HAVING TO LOOK AT ITS OPERATION AND HOW MONEY IS BEING SPENT. MORE AND MORE ALL PUBLIC AGENCIES, NOT JUST LIBRARIES, ARE GETTING THE MESSAGE THAT THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DO THE JOB BETTER WITH LESS. THE MORE OPTIMISTIC MINDED SOULS AMONG US MIGHT SAY THAT THE CURRENT FINANCIAL DOWNTURN IS TEMPORARY AND SOON AN UP-SWING WILL ALLEVIATE THE SITUATION AND WE GLOOMY GUS'ES WILL BE PROVEN TO BE MERELY ALARMISTS. I WOULD HOPE THIS WAS RIGHT: BUT, I THINK NOT. ALL INDICATORS POINT TO A CONTINUED AND LONG-RANGE TIGHTENED FINANCIAL CONDITION FOR THE COUNTRY.

IN REMARKS SHE MADE TO THE GRADUATE OF SIMMONS COLLEGE THIS SPRING, MARGARET MEAD EMPHASIZED THIS POINT. FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXCERPTS FROM THAT SPEECH. QUOTE "I THINK WHAT'S GOING TO HAVE TO BE DONE IN THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR YEARS IS FOR EVERYONE TO REEVALUATE THE WHOLE POSITION IN THIS COUNTRY THAT WE'RE FACING IN REGARD TO WHAT WE DO FOR MONEY AND WHAT MONEY WILL BUY AND WHAT MONEY WON'T BUY. WHAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IS TO CHANGE THE PATTERNS OF CONSUMPTION IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN THE REST OF THE WORLD. THE SAME THING IS TRUE OF ENERGY. MONEY, THIS YEAR, CAN BUY YOU, AT PRESENT, ALL THE GAS YOU WANT, AND YOU CAN DRIVE AS WASTEFULLY AS EVER. THIS WILL NOT BE TRUE IN THE FUTURE,

AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY, AND WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO THINK IN TERMS OF ENERGY UNITS INSTEAD OF IN TERMS OF MONEY". UNQUOTE. SHE GOES ON TO SAY THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN A WHOLE SERIES OF NEW THINGS AND THAT OUR EARLIER BELIEF THAT TECHNOLOGY WOULD ENSURE PLENTY TO EAT, LOVELY SKYSCRAPERS AND SCHOOLS (INSERT LIBRARIES), JUST DOESN'T WORK, AND THAT IF WE TRIED TO SPREAD OUR TECHNOLOGY OVER THE WHOLE WORLD WE'D SIMPLY DEVASTATE THE WORLD. WE'D CUT DOWN EVERY TREE, WE'D USE UP EVERY SINGLE RESOURCE AND WE'D LEAVE A DESERT. SHE ENDS BY SAYING WE HAVE TO LEARN SOMETHING NOW AND IT'S GOING TO BE ROUGH.

AFTER THIS LONG GLOOMY DISSERTATION, I SHOULD GET BACK TO DAN'S ORIGINAL CHARGE AND TRY TO RELATE ALL OF THIS TO HOW A COUNTY LIBRARIAN PROMOTES LIBRARY SERVICE EFFECTIVELY WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS.

NUMBER ONE. WE CONTINUE TO DO ALL OF THOSE THINGS WE HAVE ALL HEARD AND TALKED ABOUT FOR MANY YEARS.

WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY SOLICIT AND ENCOURAGE CITIZEN SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL LIBRARY AND ITS SERVICES BECAUSE IN THE LONG RUN IT IS THE LAY CITIZEN WHO WILL BE THE BEST ADVOCATE FOR THE LIBRARY AT WHATEVER LEVEL - FEDERAL, STATE OR LOCAL. HOWEVER, THIS CITIZEN SUPPORT CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. IT WILL ONLY COME IF HE FEELS WE ARE PROVIDING A PRODUCT THAT HE FEELS WORTHY OF HIS SUPPORT. AS THE COMPETITION FOR THE TAX DOLLAR BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT THIS CITIZEN SUPPORT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE CRITICAL. THIS WILL MEAN GETTING RIGHT DOWN TO THE NITTY-GRITTY OF LIBRARY SERVICE. WE WILL NEED TO ASSESS WHETHER WE ARE REALLY PROVIDING SERVICES THE CITIZEN NEEDS AND WANTS. NO LONGER CAN WE ASSUME THAT CITIZENS WILL ACCEPT WITHOUT QUESTION THE FACT THAT PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS KNOW BEST WHAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC NEEDS AND WANTS. THIS MESSAGE WAS PUT FORTH LOUD AND CLEAR BY MOST OF THE LAY PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY PLANNING INSTITUTE HELD LAST WEEK.

WE SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS, LETTING THEM KNOW THE NEEDS OF LIBRARIES: HOWEVER, THIS MUST BE DONE WITH AN UNDERSTANDING WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS ARE FACED WITH EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DECISIONS ON HOW TO BEST USE THE TAX DOLLAR. THEY ARE ALSO FACED WITH PRESSURES FROM ALL COMERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MANY PROGRAMS ALONG WITH AN EVER MOUNTING GENERAL PRESSURE TO REDUCE GOVERNMENT SPENDING. TOO OFTEN IN THE PAST WE HAVE DAMNED ELECTED OFFICIALS PUBLICLY AS BEING ANTI-INTELLECTUAL, OR, EVEN WORSE YET, AS NON-READERS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT SUPPORTED ALL OF OUR REQUESTS. WE MAY NOT BE HAPPY WITH THEIR DECISIONS AND, IN FACT, THEY MAY NOT BE WISE ONES: HOWEVER, IN THE LONG-RUN, IT DOES OUR CAUSE LITTLE GOOD TO QUESTION THEIR MOTIVES AND ETHICS , AND IN SOME CASES, INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE AND THANK OUR SUPPORTERS, BUT IT WILL DO US LITTLE GOOD TO DAMN THE OTHERS WHO DO NOT GIVE THEIR SUPPORT. WHENEVER A DISCUSSION LIKE THIS COMES UP, SOMEONE WILL MENTION THE NEED FOR A GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN. OBVIOUSLY, A GOOD PR PROGRAM WILL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN PROMOTING THE LIBRARY AND ITS SERVICES; HOWEVER, IT CANNOT REPLACE THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD LIBRARY SERVICE WHICH MEETS THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS. IN THE LONG-RUN,NO PR PROGRAM WILL SAVE A POOR PRODUCT. OUR EMPHASIS NEEDS TO BE ON PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE TO THE GREATEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE, WHILE MAKING THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DOING THE BEST JOB POSSIBLE OF SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT OUR SERVICES. THESE ACTIVITIES GO HAND-IN-HAND AND CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

ALONG WITH THESE TESTED AND PROVEN INGREDIENTS, WE WILL NEED TO BEGIN TO DEVOTE MORE SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ONES.

FIRST, AND PERHAPS MOST CRITICAL, IS THAT WE WILL HAVE TO DEVELOP AND USE WELL THOUGHT OUT MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE. ALTHOUGH

I DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE PEAT, MARWICK AND MITCHELL REPORT ON CALIFORNIA'S LIBRARY SYSTEMS, THERE ARE TWO STATEMENTS IN THIS REPORT APPROPRIATE TO THIS PROGRAM.

THE FIRST STATEMENT: THE RISING COSTS OF NEARLY EVERY COMPONENT OF LIBRARY SERVICE MAY, WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING INCREASES IN EFFECTIVENESS AND RESOURCE SHARING PROGRAMS, CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN EXISTING SERVICE LEVELS.

THE SECOND STATEMENT: PUBLIC LIBRARIES WILL BE PRESSED EVEN HARDER THAN AT PRESENT TO JUSTIFY THEIR SHARE OF PUBLIC FUNDS. IF THE ADVERSE TREND IS TO BE REVERSED, IMPRESSIVE AND WELL-DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE OF GOOD QUALITY AND ECONOMICAL SERVICE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE REQUIRED.

THE CRITICAL PHRASE HERE IS "IMPRESSIVE AND WELL-DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE." THIS WILL REQUIRE PERFORMANCE MEASURES HITHERTO NOT AVAILABLE NOR USED BY LIBRARIES. NO LONGER WILL IT BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO REST OUR CASE ON CIRCULATION; REFERENCE, AND POPULATION STATISTICS RELATED TO MINIMUM STANDARDS QUALIFIED WITH ILL-DEFINED WORDS LIKE ADEQUATE, QUALITY, AND THE LIKE.

ALTHOUGH I AM NOT NAIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO FORESAKE THE AGE-OLD GAME OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING, LOBBYING AND WIDE-SPREAD CITIZEN ADVOCACY, I AM JUST AS CERTAIN THAT OUR CASE WILL NOW HAVE TO REST ON A SOLID BODY OF DATA AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS WHICH WILL SHOW CLEARLY HOW MUCH WE CAN PRODUCE WITH THE TAX DOLLARS WE GET AND HOW MUCH MORE WE CAN PROVIDE WITH THE TAX DOLLARS WE HOPE TO GET.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT WE BEGIN TO DEVELOP AN AWARENESS AMONG LOCAL OFFICIALS, ELECTED AND APPOINTED, OF HOW THE LIBRARY FITS INTO THE TOTAL PATTERN OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC. ALTHOUGH WE ALL KNOW IT,

WE HAVE NOT DONE ALL WE CAN TO EXPLAIN THE LIBRARY'S UNIQUE SITUATION OF BEING ABLE TO DELIVER AND COMMUNICATE INFORMATION. ESPECIALLY IN LARGER JURISDICTIONS WHERE GEOGRAPHY BECOMES A FACTOR THE LIBRARY USUALLY HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER AND BEST LOCATED DISTRIBUTION POINTS TIED TOGETHER WITH ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS. BESIDES BEING A TRUE FUNCTION OF LIBRARY SERVICE, THE RECOGNITION OF THIS ROLE OF LIBRARIES CAN SERVE TO SOLIDIFY OUR IMPORTANCE IN THE MINDS OF GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS.

ALTHOUGH I COULD GO ON AND ON ABOUT ALL OF THE OTHER THINGS WE LIBRARIANS HAVE TALKED ABOUT FOR YEARS, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR TRULY COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LIBRARIES WHICH RESULT IN REAL ECONOMIES, THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING REALISTIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, THE NEED FOR LONG-RANGE PLANNING, I THINK I WILL END WITH A SIMPLE TRUISM (MAYBE A CLICHE) THAT THE BEST WAY TO PROMOTE A LIBRARY EFFECTIVELY WITH ANYONE IS TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE LEVEL OF LIBRARY SERVICE; ONE THAT CAN BE TESTED AND PROVEN THROUGH SOME LOGICAL MEASURE OF PERFORMANCE.

IF WE CAN DO THIS, AND MAKE OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS AWARE THAT WE ARE REALLY DOING THE JOB, WE WILL NOT NEED TO FEAR FOR THE FUTURE EVEN THOUGH, AS MARGARET MEAD POINTS OUT, THE FUTURE MAY BE ROUGH, SUCH ADVERSITY OFTEN IS THE CATALYST FOR TRULY SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS. I WOULD HOPE THAT IS WHERE LIBRARIES STAND TODAY AND THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT WILL FORCE US INTO A MORE EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICE IN THE FUTURE.

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